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Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership (APNEP)  
May 2023

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# Sound Stories

## May 2023



Spring is an exciting time when we welcome signs of renewal and celebrate new beginnings!

At APNEP, spring means warmer temperatures, tree leaf-out and flowering of [laurel](#) along our streams. It's also time for staff to join teachers and students to release shad into our rivers and streams throughout our region. The [Shad in the Classroom](#) engages students in hands-on, outdoor learning about American

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events with participating classrooms is always one of the highlights of our spring.

Spring also means we get to join our National Estuary Program partners at the [annual meeting](#) which happens every March. This year the annual meeting was in Washington D.C. where we were able to meet with our partners from EPA, NOAA, USFWS, and ACOE to learn about potential areas for collaborations.

APNEP is thrilled to announce our new [APNEP-NC Sea Grant Joint Fellow](#). We would like to thank all the applicants for submitting their proposals for this annual fellowship. This year we would like to congratulate [Yasamin Sharifi](#) who has been awarded the 2023 fellowship! Yasamin is a Ph.D. student at UNC Chapel Hill's [Institute of Marine Sciences](#) who is studying how seagrass in the Core Sound stores carbon, and whether seagrass has the potential to offset negative impacts of climate change.

Lastly, this April we welcomed a new staff member, Steve Anderson to the APNEP team! Steve is our Partnership Coordinator who is coming to us from Duke University. They will be heavily involved in the partnerships communication and engagement work while bringing his broad background in ecology to a wide range of projects in the region. He has worked in many ecosystems throughout N.C. but is particularly fond of coastal wetlands, urban streams, and bottomland floodplains. Please join us in welcoming Steve to the APNEP family!

Until next time,

Dr. Bill Crowell  
APNEP Director

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## News

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### Shad in the Classroom

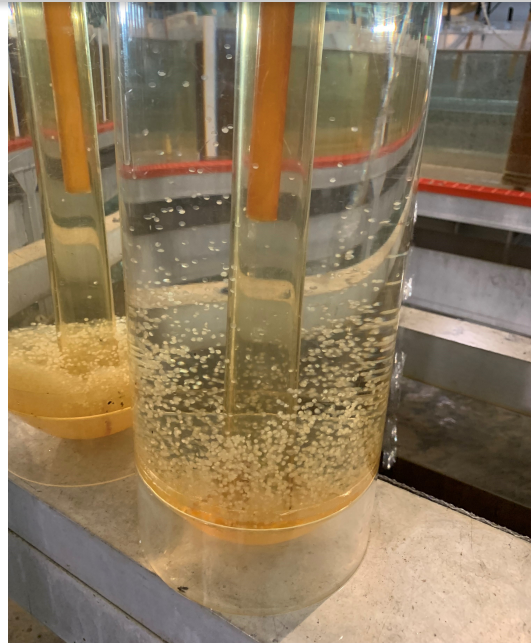
led by the [NC Museum of Natural Sciences](#) and [SO FISH and Wildlife Services](#), has returned last month to enable K-12 students throughout the Albemarle-Pamlico watershed to better understand the scientific process, be inspired to pursue careers in sciences, and to foster a desire to protect their waterways.

Through Shad in the Classroom, students gain hands-on experience raising American shad from egg to baby shad, known as fry. After raising American shad eggs in their classrooms, participating classes are encouraged to travel to local rivers to release the baby shad.

North Carolina's rivers in the APNEP region and their floodplain habitat are important spawning grounds for anadromous fish, including the American shad. American shad populations are well below historic levels due to factors including dam construction, overfishing, and water pollution. Shad in the Classroom is an important outreach tool for raising students' and communities' consciousness about these important ecosystem issues in the APNEP region.





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*Photos, from right to left and top to bottom: A class evaluates macro-invertebrates collected from the river; students look at shad fry in the classroom; shad eggs at the fish hatchery.*

[Learn more about Shad in the Classroom](#)

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## New Resource

We created a APNEP **LinkTree**, a one-stop shop for staff, partners, and the broader community to access and share all of APNEP's resources.

The webpage includes everything from links to regional news, project summaries, our website, and social media.

[Check it out!](#)

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## Staff & Management Conference Updates

As you may, or may not be aware, this is the first APNEP newsletter in quite some time. Although this does not reflect how busy we have been working to protect and restore the resources of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuary system, it does mean that we are even more excited to share some updates with you!

APNEP staff have been hard at work updating the [Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#) (CCMP) for the next 5 years! We have been working closely with the Leadership Council to update and streamline CCMP objectives and actions. These changes will steer the partnership's work, and support the ever-changing needs of communities and natural systems in the Albemarle-Pamlico region in response to threats including sea-level rise, water quality concerns, and habitat loss. We anticipated sharing a revised draft of the CCMP for review in Fall 2023.

The three core groups that comprise our Management Conference have continued meeting regularly to steer and implement the work APNEP does with many exceptional partners throughout the region. The Management Conference (established under a new [Executive Order 250](#) in 2022) includes the Leadership Council (LC), Science & Technology Advisory Committee (STAC), and the newly reformed Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The purpose of the CAC is to work with the Leadership Council on CCMP implementation and meaningful community engagement activities. Committee members serve as liaisons to citizens, agencies, tribes, and relevant parties regarding environmental and natural resource management relevant to CCMP implementation.

The CAC met for the first time on March 13, 2023 to develop relationships, discuss the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Work Plan and Equity Strategy, and learn about management plan updates. The reforming of this committee was driven by the need to engage diverse communities and populations in CCMP implementation and represent diverse perspectives of constituents in the region. APNEP seeks to continually engage more voices and perspectives reflecting the diversity of the communities in the region, so collectively we can more effectively identify, preserve, and restore the natural resources of our region while building capacity and resiliency of the communities throughout the Piedmont and Coastal Plain of N.C. and southeastern V.A.

You can learn more about our [Management Conference](#), our development of BIL

public participation and listed on our [events page](#).

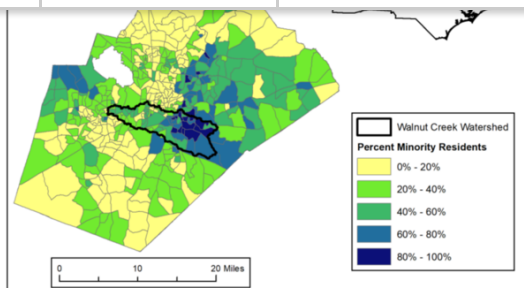
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# Partner Spotlight

## Walnut Creek Watershed Inducted into the Urban Waters Federal Partnership

APNEP celebrated with the Raleigh community including many regional and federal partners at the Walnut Creek Wetland Center for the induction of Walnut Creek at the 21st location to be added to Environmental Protection Agency's [Urban Waters Federal Partnership](#) (UWFP). Although there has been years of community work being done in the watershed through various collaborations like the Walnut Creek Wetland Community Partnership, the addition of Walnut Creek to the UWFP aims to provide resources and capacity to overburdened and economically distressed communities to improve opportunity through resources that enhance capacity for environmental stewardship, flood reduction, youth educational programs, and social and economic benefits that have long been non-existent.

On April 21, 2023 APNEP had the chance to celebrate with our regional and federal partners including PEJ, Carolina Wetlands Association, N.C. Sea Grant, and WRRRI among many others! A community festival [Our Creek, Our Communities](#) took place the following day at the [Southeast Raleigh YMCA](#) that was free and open to the public. The hope is for this celebration to become an annual event bringing the community together to traditions and heritage, and environmental education and stewardship.

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Walnut Creek Watershed (black outline) with census block colored by percent minority in Wake County (left); Steve Anderson (APNEP) was able to attend the event, meet new partners and reconnect with existing partners like Amin Davis and Diana Toledo (River Network) (right: photo credit to D. Toledo).

[Sound Rivers](#) and N.C. State's College of Natural Resources have also received funding from [Sea Grant](#) for a project that will provide the local community with training on monitoring and water quality improvements in Little Rock Creek in Raleigh. Consider subscribing to the [Walnut Creek Wetlands Community Partnership](#) email list for updates on the project "Embracing ways to engage research in the Walnut Creek watershed."

We also encourage you to visit the [Walnut Creek Wetland Park](#), and learn more from the [Partners for Environmental Justice](#) website on the historical context and ongoing initiatives in Walnut Creek [here](#).

## Celebrate Earth Day Year-Round with NC Office of Environmental Education

Did you know that recordings of the DEQ [Office of Environmental Education and Public Affairs](#)' "Lunchtime Discovery" guest lecture series are available on their website? These weekly lectures are hosted by professionals from a wide variety of environmental fields and are streamed from the NC Museum of Natural Sciences.

[Watch Past Lectures](#)



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## Current Grant Opportunities

[May 1, 2023 \(rolling\): Lead Service Line Replacement Funds](#)

[May 19, 2023: Wild & Scenic Rivers Stewardship Partners Funding](#)

[June 1, 2023: Urban & Community Forestry IRA Grants](#)

Additional Grant Details

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## What We're Reading & Watching

[The Future of Estuaries Under Climate and Land-Use Change](#) (*SCASC*)

[The Potential for Pocosin Peatland Carbon Storage](#) (*PBS*)

[Scenic Rivers Stewardship Partners Support Map](#) (*River Network*)

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Please contact [Steve Anderson](#)

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